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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

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April 21, 2004

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Bryce Yokomizo, Director

SUBJECT: **ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION - FINAL REPORT**

On July 2, 2002, your Board granted my Department permission to accept a \$187,500 *Supporting Families After Welfare Reform* grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. A portion of this funding was used to pilot the Healthcare Emphasis on Learning Project (HELP), an educational healthcare outreach project, which was designed to increase the number of individuals and families who retain their Medi-Cal coverage.

In addition to increasing the Medi-Cal retention rate, this bi-fold project sought to educate Medi-Cal beneficiaries about the importance of utilizing and retaining their health care benefits and to increase staff knowledge about recent policy and procedural changes. During the grant period, my staff developed and piloted several interventions for both departmental staff and persons receiving and applying for Medi-Cal benefits. The project interventions included the following:

- **Medi-Cal Verification Guide**

An educational tool designed to assist Eligibility staff in correctly determining when verification is or is not required for Medi-Cal. The verification guide was distributed to staff during reinforcement training sessions held between June and August 2003.

- **Participant Glossary**

This glossary of terms provides simplified definitions for hard-to-understand words found on State-mandated applications, notices and forms. The glossary has been distributed to all Medi-Cal applicants in his/her declared primary language during the intake process.

- **Medi-Cal Redetermination Return Envelope Redesign**

The Medi-Cal redetermination return envelope was redesigned to advise beneficiaries that additional postage is required when returning completed redeterminations and to include useful friendly reminders on the reverse side. The envelope was redesigned after it was discovered that completed redeterminations were being returned for insufficient postage or stamped postage due by the post office. This delayed the receipt of the packet and ultimately jeopardized their benefits.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

▪ **Medi-Cal Retention Worker Concept Evaluation**

A specialized worker contacted families who requested that their Medi-Cal case be terminated to advise them of their potential continual eligibility to Medi-Cal. During the test period, the Retention Worker received 46 referrals and was successful in convincing 31 families to retain their healthcare coverage. At this time, staffing resources do not permit the allocation of a dedicated Retention Worker in each district office. However, to maximize our retention efforts, my staff will be incorporating the strategies from this concept in our basic Medi-Cal training at the DPSS Academy and reinforcing these techniques with district staff.

Use of Grant Funding

Of the \$187,500 RWJ grant awarded, my Department received a payment of \$168,750. The project expenditures for the one year grant period totaled \$104,823. In accordance with the Foundation's grant terms, federal Medicaid funds were used to cover half of the total project expenditures. The other half, or \$52,411.50, was paid by the Foundation grant leaving \$116,388.50 in unspent funds.

All of the grant funds were not used because in Fiscal Year 2002-03, we received additional Medi-Cal program funding as part of the January 2003 Governor's Budget. This additional funding allowed my Department to utilize Medi-Cal program funds for outreach and retention purposes, resulting in unspent grant funds which can be redistributed to other grantees.

Although we are no longer participating in the RWJ project, we are committed to continuing our efforts to help educate the Medi-Cal public about the importance of keeping their healthcare coverage.

BY:sme

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors